FLYING COLORS: ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM ON PEOPLE AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

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Given the rapid increase in the accessibility of travel, the tourism industry has evolved to the point where people of all backgrounds can fly and see other countries, given the adequate financial resources. This paper explores the impact of modern travel and tourism on people and their communities. With the advent of certain technologies, both the physical and informational intricacies associated with travel have evolved considerably, providing people across the world with opportunities to connect with others and integrate with local cultures. This paper was driven by the skepticism on the commoditization of the travel industry, where people are more inclined to seek quickly packaged and curated experiences over richer interactions with the local communities of their travel destination. Through academic research and analysis of real interactions, the paper seeks to answer the following questions: Why do people travel? When did leisure travel first emerge? What are the different types of travel? How are travelers perceived by a local community? Is tourism a net positive or negative for countries? To what extent if any does traveling have on one's cultural identity? To answer such questions, I first provide a brief background on the history of travel. I then contextualize travel in the status quo, while assessing environmental, sociocultural, and economic impacts. Next, I examine potential links between paid time off (PTO) policy, cultural identity, and one's propensity to travel. I conclude the paper by providing my own analysis on the future trajectory of travel.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

"Don't listen to what they say,
Go see."
*– **Chinese Proverb***

My desire to write about travel and cultural identity hinges on my own life experiences as the son of immigrants. Born in Boston, MA and raised in Plano, TX, I grew up in an environment vastly different from that of my parents. My mother and father, both from Chennai, India, only moved to the United States in 1993. My parents entered the United States after cementing a South Indian identity for roughly 30 years. Their lifestyles in the suburbs of major metropolitan cities like Boston and Dallas led to a different world view, one that contrasts vastly from my own.

Growing up, my identity felt disjointed. I spent my time at home trying to disengage from the roots of my family's culture, attempting to become more "American." Yet at school, my peers and teachers treated me differently, because I came from a disparate environment. Like many immigrant families, my family would often travel back to our home country to visit Chennai every three to four years, where I felt even more of an outsider. People around me knew from my attempts to speak our native language, Tamil, that I was not from the area, so I felt that I was treated with a lesser level of comfort.

Traveling gives us the opportunity to overcome these intangible barriers. Why spend years listening to the stories of others, when we can venture out to the world and write stories of our own? The transformative nature of travel has increasingly become ingrained as part of the overall package. Despite the rise of high-quality desktop backgrounds, nothing beats learning about the wonders of the world than experiencing them yourself.

The autonomy associated with travel seems rather novel when juxtaposing history's view of the activity. Several derivations exist for how the word "travel" first came about. Some say it comes from the Old French word *travailler,* which means to work strenuously or toil (Online Etymology Dictionary). Others claim the first known use of the word "travel" occurred in the 14th century, with the Middle English *travailen* meaning to torment, labor, strive, or journey. While outdated, both derivations seem to imply a unifying idea: in ancient times, society perceived travel as an arduous task, a definition long ways from the whimsical ideas that people associate with travel and tourism today.

Travel and tourism involve hundreds of millions of people across the globe each year. A recent report by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) puts the magnitude into perspective, as international arrivals grew by a whopping 7% in 2017 to reach a total of 1.3 billion. While the statistic doesn't account for travelers involved in more than one journey per year, the scale of the tourism industry has grown tremendously. Citizens across the world receive exposure to tourism and its numerous impacts.

Such news comes at a contrast while looking back into much of recorded history, when travel was cumbersome, uncomfortable and often dangerous. Only within the last 150 years has the activity become more accessible to the general populace, where pleasure has increasingly become the core motivation behind journeys. Unlike the past, travel for pleasure represents a distinct type of activity for oneself. Not only is traveling just "something to do," but it represents a novel experience that provides an opportunity for self-growth.

According to the non-profit organization *Protect: Time Off*, 84% of Americans said that it's important for them to use their time off to travel. With many options available for the average workers to use their PTO, travel and tourism leads the pool by an overwhelming

majority. Thus, analyzing the impacts of such a topic is important, as it provides a lens into the hearts of minds of why we work so hard, and what we ultimately strive towards to achieve deeper meaning in life.

In this paper, I will first present a brief historical overview of travel in the larger context of world history. Next, I provide a modern description of travel to assess the state of travel and tourism in the status quo. Within this section, I provide possible explanations for why people travel, define the various types of travel, and consider globalization's influence on travel.

This thesis will then address travel and tourism's impact on communities in three main areas: environmental, sociocultural, and economic impacts. Within each category, I aim to provide a balanced view with positive and negative effects.

I then examine how travel and tourism affects travelers themselves. I delve deeper into the supposed links between travel and aspects of one's identity by integrating a series of interviews conducted during my own travels and investigate the role that paid time off (PTO) policy plays in determining one's propensity for travel in the first place.

Finally, I conclude my thesis with my thoughts on the commoditization of travel. I will synthesize commonly heard theories surrounding the importance of travel, and explore what the current mindset regarding travel means for future generations.

My thesis utilizes the analysis and interpretation of various piece of literature: mainly historical documentation and studies that showcase impacts. While the brunt of my research revolves around secondary texts of articles in journals, newspapers, and other facets of academia, I recognize the difficulty in assigning objective remarks to an activity that remains rather subjective in nature.

In order to build credibility for the analytical portions of this thesis, I decided to draw upon my undergraduate travel experiences to foreign countries. I reference three distinct experiences in this paper: 1) My summer studying abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2) My winter traveling solo to Madrid, Barcelona, and Seville in Spain, and 3) My winter traveling solo to New Delhi and Jaipur in Northern India.

During my trip in New Delhi, I entered the journey with hopes of documenting my findings about travel for this thesis alone. In various parts of this paper, I share profiles of actual people that I met during my time living in the Madpackers Hostel in New Delhi, India. I have omitted the last names of my interviewees to maintain a degree of anonymity. While the nature of the interviews was indeed conversational, I provided context upfront regarding my overarching desire to learn more about travel to help write this thesis.

Chapter 2

A Brief Background on the History of Travel

Before jumping into the analysis of tourism in the status quo, one must inspect how travel for humans first came about. While the academic community coins early migrations as travel, this thesis hones in on travel as it relates to an individual's desire to move from one place to another. *Homo sapiens* originated in Africa around 200,000 years ago, while colonization began about 70,000 years ago, most notably within the Americas and Australia. By about 10,000 years ago, almost every major inhabitable landmass on Earth maintained some form of human life.

2.1 The Rise and Fall of Nomadic Communities

With the rise of the Neolithic Revolution, the human civilization evolved from small nomadic bands of hunter-gatherers to larger, agricultural settlements. Agricultural innovation brought undoubted gifts to humanity, allowing people to grow their own crops on their own lands. Such a transition also marks a new emphasis on ownership, which rose to prominence with people finally being able to settle down. Staying in an area for more than a couple weeks or months meant more time to dwell, and create dwellings to stay in. From owning land, to homes, to food and material goods, the world set course for a lifestyle that people still employ today: staying in one place, occasionally moving around for different reasons, only to come back to the home base once duties have been taken care of.

The nomadic people seem the most interesting when it comes to surveying the first forms of travel. After all, the nomads had no choice but to travel on an almost daily basis. The nomadic lifestyle mimics what some of the most serious travelers attempt to do today. Commonly known as nomads, these people move from one place to another, never setting up a home base. While

nomads did travel in communities, the groups themselves had to be lean enough to support quick movement from point A to point B. Dwellings would be temporary, resembling the modern ideas surrounding camping, albeit for a much longer term in life: all of it.

Nomads had to be self-sufficient to survive. The rationale for the nomadic lifestyle centered around access to food, which primarily came in the form of killing moving livestock, or gathering nuts, berries, and other small foods that were part of plants. Well known examples of ethnic groups such as the Berbers, Kazakhs, and Bedouins, lived in tents with few belongings inside the tents themselves. The nomads carried the few goods they owned in wagons. While the financial stability and raw motives may differ, the advent of modern backpacking most closely resembles the traveling of nomads. Constantly moving from place to place, nomads hold their place in history as the first documented "world travelers."

As mentioned earlier, the rise of the Neolithic Revolution paved the way for both agricultural innovation and the end of the nomadic lifestyle. Humans were finally able to rest peacefully in places they called "home." While the societies of the Fertile Crescent lived in conditions far from that of what people have today, the general lifestyle of staying at a home base puts people from such a time closer to the status quo than the older nomadic travelers.

2.2 Technological Advancements Improving Travel

It was not up until a few thousand years ago that people began to seek alternative methods of transport. Using donkeys and horses to transport both people and things on land, humans took travel a step further around 3500 BC with the invention of the wheel. The wheel helped people travel faster and further than was ever previously possible on foot. By applying the newfound invention to wagons, coaches, and carriages, societies grew rapidly.

Larger architectural developments by the second century brought people across the world closer together with the invention of roads by the Romans. With transportation infrastructure in place, wealthy Greeks and Romans could finally travel for leisure. The ultra-elite, who carried enough wealth for multiple homes, traveled back and forth to their summer homes in cities like Pompeii and Baiae. Travel evolved from an arduous and dangerous process driven by trade and migration to a mere inconvenience.

2.3 Identifiable Travel Patterns

At every point in history, technological advances made travel easier and more accessible. The grand expedition made by Christopher Columbus in 1492, which took over 10 weeks by ship, would only take a couple hours overnight for one to fly from Spain to the United States. As societies integrated travel with their economies, travel while cumbersome became essential. In the Middle Ages, the wholesale sector required merchants to deal with caravans or sea-voyages, end-user retail required itinerant peddlers to wander from village to hamlet, wandering monks and friars brought theology and pastoral support to previously neglected areas, traveling minstrels spread their poetry from place to place, and armies scaled swaths of land in their respective crusades (Byttebier).

The idea of religious pilgrimages rooted in the Abrahamic religions spread across the European and Islamic worlds, finally creating the demand for both domestic and even international travel. Modern pilgrimages such as visiting Jerusalem for Jesus Christ or traveling to Mecca, Saudi Arabia for the Hajj continue to exist today. Religious pilgrimages represent a unique nature of travel, such movements not only stressed the destination, but also the journey.

People longed to transform parts of themselves through these pilgrimages, an idea that would be later explored in less religious and more secular contexts.

2.4 The Grand Tour

By the late 16th century, young European aristocrats and financially privileged men traveled to various marquee European cities to complete their education in both arts and literature. Coined "The Grand Tour," one traveled to and from various prominent cities: London, Paris, Venice, Florence and Rome. The custom flourished for roughly 200 years from around 1660 to the 1840s, when the introduction of large-scale rail transport made the journey accessible to larger communities.

The Grand Tour was rooted in both education and exclusivity, marking an educational "rite of passage." Initially a setup crafted by the British nobility and wealthy landed gentry, the Grand Tour spread quickly to the young and wealthy mean of other Protestant Northern European nations, and even some South and North Americans by the second half of the 18th century. While the specific tradition and itinerary faded in popularity with the subsequent decline of enthusiasm for neo-classical culture, the central view that traveling to Europe topped off one's educational understanding of the world remained ingrained for many people in the Western hemisphere.

As the *New York Times* points out in 2008, the Grand Tour began with "wealthy young Englishmen … taking a post-Oxbridge trek through France and Italy in search of art, culture and the roots of Western civilization" (Gross). The accessibility of this adventure was limited to few, as "with nearly unlimited funds, aristocratic connections and months (or years) to roam, they

commissioned paintings, perfected their language skills and mingled with the upper crust of the Continent" (Gross).

The author brings readers back to reality by forecasting the impact of the Grand Tour on the status quo, with a plethora of Americans engaging in their own sort of "Grand Tour" to Europe. In a joking manner, the author assures readers that the modern tour seems less than grand, as his 100 euros a day and few email addresses of friends paled in comparison to the original Grant Tourists' letters of credit granting them access to riches, and their letters of introduction to society figures.

The primary value of the Grand Tour rests in intimate exposure to the cultural legacy of classical antiquity and the Renaissance. While a 17th-century British aristocrat may view his Grand Tour to top off his education, academics and artists from other parts of the world may not think the same. The Grand Tour employs a clear juxtaposition between Western Europe and the rest of the world, claiming the root of true knowledge and art. The term Cicerone, which refers to guides of museums and galleries, began to appear in English and Italian journals that described people's travels to Europe as a part of the Grand Tour. Cicerones exist today in various forms, from people disguised as government officials who attempt to make small livings explaining the history of the Taj Mahal to unsuspecting tourists, to pre-recorded applications that give auditory context for the tech-savvy tourist visiting museums across Europe.

A quick flash forward to the status quo reveals the lasting influence of the Grand Tour. Modern study abroad programs in undergraduate institutions to countries like the United Kingdom represent a clear bias for Western-based academic values. For those who could afford it, semester long excursions to Europe meant expanding one's intellectual horizons, an idea that mirrors that of the Grand Tour over 300 years ago.

2.5 Railroads: Bringing Accessibility to Travel

Known as the "City of Water," Venice prides itself as a city that uses canals and bridges to cleanly transport people over water across 118 small islands. While travel by water provided both comfort and speed as compared to land-travel, the 19th century invention of the railroad transformed what it meant to travel and brought tourism to income classes other than the wealthy elite. Large networks spanning even larger distances redefined the idea of "high speed" transportation. The usage of freight trains for cargo and transporting large groups of people marked a clear shift in the dynamic of travel: increased accessibility to lower income classes.

True leisure travel in the form of tourism began to take place. Notable individuals such as English businessman Thomas Cook took advantage of quickly evolving trends, as Cook started selling tourism packages that grouped both trains and hotels together to make lives easier for people unfamiliar with seasoned travel (von Lupke-Schwarz). People like Cook revamped statistics regarding travel. In 1800, roughly one percent of the world population could travel. By 1841, Cook managed to leverage the invention of the railroads to "send hordes of tourists off on adventures" (von Lupke-Schwarz). The pooling of both train and hotel reservations meant cheaper prices, which furthered the accessibility of travel to people.

2.6 The Final Frontier: Air Travel

By the 20th century, America had gained a brilliant reputation for its knack for technological innovation, which was only furthered with the Wright brothers' creation of flight. World War I and World War II forced countries to take the Wright brothers' design to great heights, both figuratively and literally.

The end of World War II marked a rapid increase in the number of pilots available for general aviation, as thousands of military pilots previously a part of the air force came out of military service, along with surplus aircraft from the War. As the same time, aircraft companies shifted their manufacturing capabilities to create lighter aircraft to accommodate a growing middle-class market, who were more than willing to pay sums of money to travel across the ocean via flight. The deregulation of airlines in 1978 allowed airlines to set their own routes and prices, which increased travel for Americans even further from 205 million in 1975 to a staggering 638 million Americans by the year end of 2000.

On a global level, the 1960s represent a key inflection point in the fabric of travel, as before then relatively few groups participated on a regular basis, with travel primarily being confined to Europe, North America, and a small subset of locations across the world. Modern tourism erupted with advances in technology and transportation methods. The Pacific Region and East Asia became the fastest growing area for international tourism in the latter quarters of the 20th century.

2.7 Definitions of Tourism

Due to the dynamic nature of tourism, experts have had difficulty in providing a succinct definition for the activity. Matthieson and Wall in 1982 said that tourism involved "the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during the stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater for their needs" (Matthieson & Wall). In 1991, the UNWTO further took a step to define tourism: "the activities of a person travelling outside his or her usual environment for less than a specified period of time whose main purpose of travel is other than for exercise of an activity

remunerated from the place visited." While both definitions frame the traveler taking a temporary trip outside their normal lifestyle, neither address the impacts of tourism.

Jafari in 1981 did include references to impacts of tourism in his definition: "Tourism is a study of man away from his usual habitat, of the industry which responds to his needs and the impacts that both he and the industry have for the host socio-cultural, economic and physical environments" (Jafari). Clearly, tourism has a two-sided impact: one on the traveler and the other on the community itself.

There exist several categories of tourism in the modern era, ranging from international tourism, internal tourism, domestic tourism, and national tourism. According to Prosser in 1998, international tourism involves people visiting an overseas destination, while domestic tourism confines the visit within the same country. Internal tourism takes domestic tourism one step further with visits in a region within a country, while national tourism represents more of an umbrella term that considers all forms of tourism within a country. Nevertheless, all types of tourism carry a set of impacts on the community.

Chapter 3

Travel in the Status Quo

While thousands of years ago the nomads traveled mainly on necessity, people have various reasons to travel. Even the term "leisure travel" branches out into several distinct categories. Further analyzing the link between travel and identity unveils that the concept remains an intimate and personal experience for many, motivating people to chase different experiences based off changing tastes and preferences. The following chapter delves more deeply into the different categories.

3.1 Religious Tourism

As mentioned in the background portion of this paper, the demand for religious travel has existed for hundreds and thousands of years. Commonly referred to as "faith tourism," the term refers to a type of tourism where people travel either individually or in groups for various purposes: pilgrimage, missionary, or a fellowship that rests closer to leisure travel.

While the commonly discussed Abrahamic pilgrimages may initially come to mind, the world's largest form of religious tourism happens in India for the Kumbh Mela pilgrimage. While the exact age of the festival remains unknown, the Kumbh or Kumbha Mela composes of four fairs that make up the entire journey: Prayagraj Kumbh Mela, Haridwar Kumbh Mela, the Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Simhastha, and the Ujjain Simhastha. Allahabad, Haridwar, the Nashik district, and Ujjain rotate to host each one of the respective fairs, with the main festival site located on the banks of a river in each location: Ganges or Ganga at Haridwar, the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers at Allahabad, the Godavari at Nashik, and the Shipra at Ujjain (McLean).

Every 12 years, the Kumbh Mela brings devout Hindus from across the world to what has been coined as "the largest peaceful gathering in the world" which hosts the "world's largest congregation of religious pilgrims" (Embassy of India). Over a one-month period in 2013, some 120 million people visited the Maha Kumbh Mela in Allahabad, with 30 million people participating on a single day ("Record 120 million take dip as Maha Kumbh fest ends").

The spiritual importance that religious communities have with the physical world ultimately brings people across oceans together to form a religious pilgrimage. Sites such as the birth or death of founders or saints, places of marked spiritual awakening, locations where miracles were performed or witness, or areas where deities are said to reside all contribute to the desire for religious communities to make the trek on their respective pilgrimage.

Faith-seeking journeys in North America alone have been estimated to make up roughly $10 billion the religious tourism industry. Famous holy sites like the Great Mosque of Mecca, the Holy of Mimam Hoseyn in Karbala, and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome all represent tangible places for people to dream and think about journeying.

Other facets of religious tourism include missionary travel, which the world saw plenty of throughout history. While the religious pilgrimage tends to bring people together for a prescribed nature, the mission trip serves to proselytize people through the act of converting people into a certain religion or faith and several other factors become bundled with the ministries of service: education, literacy, social justice, health care, and economic development (Hale). Coined by the Jesuits in 1598, the term "mission" comes from the Latin derivation of *missionem,* which means the act of sending. People who travel for mission trips thus carry an inherent message and play the role of the messenger in the host community. While the term predominantly was used for Christian missions, it has evolved to cover other creeds and ideologies as well.

3.2 Adventure Tourism

Considered a type of niche tourism, adventure tourism or adventure travel involves exploration that comes with a certain amount of risk. While the risks themselves may be either real or perceived, the journey employs a sense of trepidation where only the few willing to take on such risks embark on the adventure. While there exists no clear operational definition, the United States has seen a sharp rise in the demand for adventure tourism with tourists going of their ways to seek vacations that involve "roads less traveled." The Adventure American Travel Trade Association attempts to define adventure travel as any tourist activity that includes physical activity, cultural exchange or connection with nature (AATA).

One study found "rush" or "flow" as key motivation factors in skilled adventure tourism (Buckley). The adrenaline rush, which comes from one stepping outside her comfort zone, tends to increase when the people performing the acts in the adventure require considerable effort to allay a perceived risk or danger. The laundry list of such activities ranges from common acts like skiing to more niche categories: mountaineering, trekking, bungee jumping, mountain biking, cycling, canoeing, scuba diving, rafting, kayaking, zip-lining, paragliding, hiking, exploring, sandboarding, caving and rock climbing (Center for Disease Control and Prevention).

While true adventure tourism involves traveling for the sake of embarking on an activity, the lines becomes blurred nowadays. Packaged experiences offered in various tourist's sites allow risk-averse families to gain rushes of their own through smaller adventures, like ziplining or parasailing in Hawaii. For the average human, extreme adventures remain as pipe dreams that never come to reality. As a result, companies intending to profit of people's desires to expand their appetite for risk package and sell their own commoditized versions of rush risky activities.

Perhaps one of the most well-known examples of adventure trips in the United States takes place in Denver, Colorado, and other ski destinations across mountainous ranges. Website such as OutThere Colorado provide advice to the American potentially interested in taking on a ski trip. To improve lagging trends in American skiing, the website breaks down the cost of a seasonal spring ski trip to a marquee ski resort in Colorado (McKee).

Accepting the reality that skiing tends to be viewed as expensive and inaccessible to some Americans, McKee provides an itemized analysis for how much a ski vacation costs for a family of four attempting to travel outside of Colorado into Breckenridge for a Spring Break trip in March. McKee's hypothetical family is traveling from Chicago and hopes to spend three days on the mountains in Breckenridge, with four total nights of lodging.

Exhibit 1: Ski trip cost breakdown for a family of four

Category	Expense	Cost	
Travel	Airfare	$	793.60
Travel	Car rental	$	253.38
Travel	Gas	$	20.00
Ski	Lift tickets	$	1,498.54
Ski	Equipment rentals	$	693.11
Ski	Lessons	$	702.00
Lodging	Hotel	$	1,620.00
Food	Eleven meals	$	400.00
	Total	$	5,980.63

The above chart clearly outlines the staggering costs that come with a common and recognizable stable of American vacationing: skiing. While the assumptions for the costs may

vary based off people willing to make sacrifices and get by with perhaps lower quality amenities in further hotels or more inconvenient flight times for cheaper airfare, the reality is that adventure tourism remains costly for the average American. The article goes on to contextualize such a steep price tag for a family that makes around $40,000 in income per year. The designated budget for such a family according to financial experts hovers around $2000 to $4000, meaning that the $6000 price tag exceeds the maximum bound of such a range by over 50% (McKee).

Andrew Denning from *the Atlantic* argues the contrary in his articled titled "How Skiing Went from the Alps to the Masses," where he provides a relative comparison of costs between what skiing used to cost before versus now. According to the article, skiing "is no longer an esoteric sport for the idle rich, but a fantastically popular new winter status-game for anyone who can afford $500 of equipment" (Denning). After World War II, concerted efforts by business men intersected with a fledgling economy to send skiing into accessible price ranges that fit the middle class. Before World War II, skiing represented luxury, as only the wealthy few had the means to "decamp to remote Alpine locations for weeks or even months, where skiers practiced a sport that they described as a profound return to nature in a mechanical era" (Denning).

While Denning does focus on the decreasing cost of the adventure itself, he fails to mention the traveling component to a modern ski trip. As displayed in Exhibit 1, travel and lodging alone cost roughly $3000 for a family of four traveling from the mid-west. There are two implications that can be drawn here. First, financial and geographical accessibility is essential to the success of mainstream adventure tourism. Second, for those who are willing to spend their income on such adventures, the value that the overall trip has on one's life exceeds the costs. Considering that the skiing remains expensive compared to the average household income in the United States, the people who travel for adventure really want it.

3.3 Backpacking

What used to be a way to make traveling more accessible to low-income individuals, backpacking has evolved considerably in the 21st century to where people of all backgrounds and demographics tend to join the journey. Backpacking takes place as a form of low-cost, independent travel. Typically involving frequent public transport and inexpensive lodging through youth hostels, backpackers fixate on meeting locals and becoming intertwined with the local culture of their respective destination.

Backpacking includes both wilderness adventures and travel to nearby countries while working in an adjacent country. According to a study in the Qualitative Sociology Review from 2007, "recent ethnographies of backpackers identify other motivations and rationales that accentuate travel experiences as formative of the self and identity" (Adkins 1). Adkins states that "backpackers constituted a heterogenous group with respect to the diversity of rationales and meanings attached to their travel experiences." Compared to other types of travelers, backpackers view travel as an overarching aspect to their identity, which fuels their day to day operations.

Despite backpackers' reputation as "tourists on tight budgets," backpackers end up spending more and stay longer in areas compared to the rest of travelers (Tourism New South Wales). In terms of demographics, the typical backpacker is young, ranging anywhere from around 18 to 35 years of age. The youthful nature of backpacking drives people to carry several unifying characteristics common among the entire backpacking community: backpackers are educated, adventurous, and price conscious (Tourism New South Wales). The article explains that most backpackers "use a variety of hostels," and crave "value for money and may not always choose the cheapest option available." Backpackers, who aren't necessarily well off

financially, create their own fortunes by spending more energy assessing the intricacies of the travel process. Compared to boxed and commoditized tours that serve suburban families venturing into the "unknown," a backpacker would prefer a more in-depth and integrated experience.

The deliberate nature of backpacking signifies a large community, where social contact ends up as one of the primary motives (Tourism New South Wales). My experiences in both Spain and India as a solo traveler confirmed this notion, as residents staying in hostels went out of their way to make plans with people they had met just minutes before. While trip planning may seem cumbersome enough with people that we know, the process ends up more streamlined for backpackers. The rationale lies in the flexible nature of backpackers. A June 2005 survey from the International Visitor Survey unveils that backpackers visiting Australia stay longer than the average international visitor: 65 nights compared with 26 nights. As a result, backpackers tend to approach their travels with flexible itineraries with general ideas about what they want to see, and only few actual bookings for lodging.

Relating to adventure tourism, backpackers often cross-shape their identity as adventure travelers that require active participation. Backpackers tend to gravitate to authentic experiences over "mainstream tourist experiences." Something to note is the sense of pride that backpackers have when seeking out such experiences, and how the mentality has crept into everyday travelers as well. In my experience, young travelers in general strive to defend their travel choices and hope to stray away from what is considered "mainstream." Yet it becomes extremely difficult to pinpoint what constitutes to "mainstream" versus what makes up an "authentic" travel experience. At the end of the day, the premise of interactions between the traveler and the local

dictates that there will exist some sort of a disconnect. A traveler inspects culture from an external point of view, standing steps away. Backpackers merely hope to close that gap.

While I have had the opportunity to travel to several countries with both friends and predominantly family, it wasn't until college that I got a taste of the world of backpacking. Purely by accident, my decision to stay at the Madpackers Hostel in New Delhi unveiled an entire culture of travelers who associated their identity with autonomy and independence. Almost all the residents I had interacted with were stopping by in Delhi, which was ultimately part of a larger journey that often took months across parts of Asia, or the entire world.

Damien – 30 years old

I met Damien while relaxing on the rooftop of the Madpackers Hostel, which was set as a common meeting point for hostellers. My conversations with most of the travelers up until this point had been somewhat whimsical in nature, Damien brought a new level of intensity and passion to his travels. He explained that Delhi was his final stop in a long series of bike rides, where he would bike all the way from Dublin, Ireland to New Delhi, India to 1) discover new aspects of himself and 2) raise money for charitable causes.

Damien had a strong internet presence, with several social media accounts set up to help document his journey. A common trend among many young backpackers in the status quo, people tended to document their journeys in a more public and outward-facing setting compared to travelers hundreds of years ago, who used a more private journaling technique. Damien explained that the publicity through social media kept him going. Called "DublinToDelhi," his Instagram account created external hype surrounding his long journey that would end up taking

around a year in total time, which encompassed biking and lingering at various stops to explore the area.

The usage of social media to document Damien's travels ended up helping him immensely. As others soon came to know of his travels, they projected their own desires to be a part of the journey by assisting Damien along the way. Damien rarely paid for food and lodging, because locals in each city would gladly let him stay with their families.

Here, we see a communal nature of backpacking take place. While each backpacker prides himself on autonomy, other backpackers come together and unite themselves as part of this community. As a result, backpackers tend to offer more hospitability to people than the average traveler, even in countries far from home. Locals pick up on such an intimate dynamic and seem more willing to allow integration from foreigners once a rapport is established.

Craze – 19 years old

Unlike the others who I interviewed throughout my time in Delhi, Craze differentiated himself. For starters, Craze's name was quite unique. Interestingly enough, his parents came up with the name "Chris," but chose to spell it as "Craze" to amplify Craze's rather "crazy" personality. A hybrid between a local and a backpacker, Craze came up to me in the common area and initiated conversation. I learned about his background: Indian, born and raised in Jaipur located several hours away from Delhi, and currently lives in Delhi himself. Craze's situation did not make sense on face value. Why would one spend money to stay at a crowded hostel while having an apartment just several miles away in the same city?

Craze acknowledged my skepticism immediately. For him, spending around $15 USD to spend a night at the hostel was a small price to pay to have the chance to interact with foreigners.

Craze sought after interactions with travelers from other countries, not only because of his love for meeting new people, but also to further educate himself about the world. For Craze, reading about the world through news articles was far from enough. On a monthly basis, Craze would pay his visits to different hostels to gain insight through interactions from people outside his culture. Why spend time and money traveling the world, when the world comes to you?

Just like not everyone has the financial means to travel across the world, not everyone can meet such diverse groups in their local hostels. Through his conversations with particularly travelers from the West, Craze explained that people perceive India as a secondary or tertiary country of interest. The combination of complex languages and underdeveloped areas contributed to travelers' perception of safety. Whether or not such perceptions carry credibility is beside the point according to Craze. Instead, Craze views the perception of India as a secondary travel destination as a benefit, because the people who do end up visiting India end up carrying years of traveling experience under their belt as seasoned backpackers. For Craze, the wealth of experiences these travelers brought meant more opportunities for himself to learn about the rest of the world.

The interactions were driven by Craze's curiosity as both an intellectual and just a human being. In exchange for stories about others' travels, Craze would take hostelers around the streets of Delhi while providing his own view of the city. Hostelers found value in what he had to say and would often form friendships that would last beyond their trips.

I had an engaging conversation with Craze myself about identity and travel. Given my appearance signaled my Indian ethnicity, Craze assumed that I was from India. While Craze was an expert at spotting foreigners from the United States and Europe, he was quite surprised to learn that I had been born and brought up in the United States. Craze pointed out that his

interactions with backpackers still left him feeling a slight amount of distance, where neither party could open to each other about certain experiences. The travelers at the core tended to identify with their home countries, while Craze was left with representing his identity as an Indian. I was able to relate to such a dynamic, given my duality of identity as a child of South Indian immigrants living in the United States. While Craze and I could share certain parts of our identities relating to Indian culture, the most unifying aspect of ourselves seemed to stem from our desire to see the world and traverse it. Yet again, I saw a distinct attachment between the act of traveling and one's identity, which can often supersede other characteristics. At the least, these differences add a plethora of flavors to conversation, shedding light on not only Craze, but also myself.

3.4 Immigration Tourism

While buying a one-way ticket to another country in search of a better life may seem daunting, my parents felt that the trip was worth it. Immigrants share several qualities with backpackers in that they face challenges between integrating with a local culture and maintaining their former identities. Travel, as evidenced numerous times in this paper, constantly shapes one's perception of herself.

When my parents first moved from India in 1991, they had little groundwork for life in the United States. Aside from a potential promise of financial stability through my father's new job, my parents were tourists at heart. They walked into stores and restaurants in hopes of quickly learning about American culture, while applying what they had learned about America before they moved. Ironically, America is a "settler colonial society," where most Americans,

apart from some Native Americans, can trace their ancestry to immigrants from other countries from around the world.

There exists an initial phase of tourism when immigrants first move into a host country. While immigrants assimilate into the culture of the host country at varying rates that are difficult to objectively measure, the process of assimilation involves activities that match that of many tourists. Immigrants motivated by their desire to learn about their new home made exploring America a deliberate act, from visiting informative museums to amusement parks like Disneyland and Universal Studios. My childhood was shaped by my parents spending their disposable income on domestic vacations, in hopes of educating ourselves of what it's like to truly be American.

In terms of statistical data, the academic community documents inflows of immigrants to the United States. In absolute terms, the United States has the largest immigrant population compared to any other country, with a staggering 47 million immigrants by 2015 alone (United Nations Population Division). Immigrants represent 14.4% of the U.S. population, and continue to form the idea that America is one big "melting pot."

Statisticians rarely document a different type of travel that is closely related to immigration: immigrants traveling back to visit their homelands. Growing up, I spent numerous summers flying to Chennai, India to spend time with my family back at home. The harsh reality for many immigrants is that while moving to a new country opens doors and opportunities, several aspects of their family and community at home are left behind.

In hopes to connect more with family back at home, my parents and other families in the South Asian community in Dallas, Texas would often travel for extended periods of time to India without a specific event in mind. My parents simply hoped to recreate their previous lifestyles

even for a brief month or two. Again, we observe identity playing the driving force in such travels. Just like my family wanted to integrate themselves with American culture, they took strong efforts to retain their Indian identity as well.

The nature of such trips evolves, however, as my parents are still perceived as visitors in their home countries. While I can't speak to other families or cultures, I observed my parents engaging in tourist-like activities in India. While their homeland provided comfort, my parents embraced their roles as visiting immigrants from the United States. With a new life, my parents ate out at local restaurants and juxtaposed their experiences with restaurants in their new home. And when the trips came to an end, my parents found themselves reaffirming their decision to move away from India, citing the better infrastructure and governance that is central to the West.

3.5 How Globalization has Changed Travel

On day one of my junior year winter break trip to Madrid, Spain, I was left gravely disappointed. After studying the Spanish language for six years, including study abroad in Argentina, I hoped that my proficiency in the language would help overcome the initial communication barriers that tourists tend to face. As a young pseudo-backpacker at the time, I approached the trip with excitement and anticipation about getting an intimate experience visiting the cities of Spain.

Instead, my attempts at connecting with the locals was met with confusion, and sometimes even intimidation. The idea of an American trying to speak Spanish in local restaurants was well received by few. It seemed that people had already decided what their perception of Americans were based off their own experiences. The locals in Madrid had a rather negative view of the bustling tourist industry.

Additionally, my view of the streets of Madrid seemed eerily familiar. Like the streets of New York, I saw glowing signs of stores that maintained a global brand presence, such as the giant golden arches that represent McDonalds, a cultural icon more than a fast food chain in countries outside of the United States. Brands like Zara, Forever 21, and Uber caught my eye as I walked through Gran Via, the main street of Madrid.

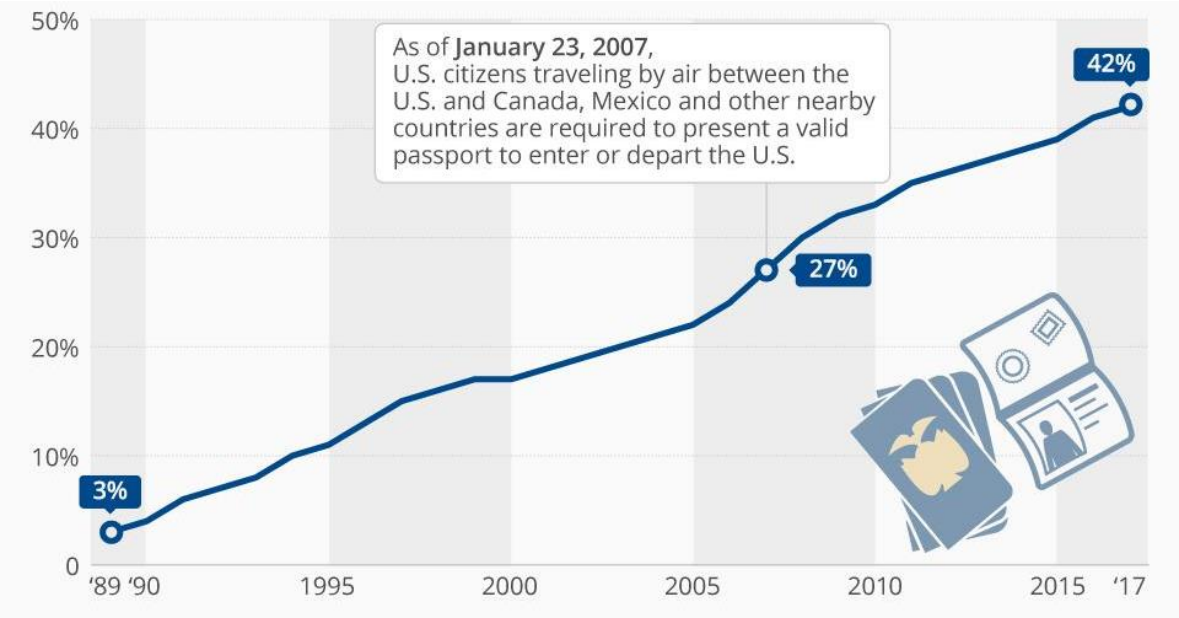
Something had changed recently to where such an experience was possible; where the city center of Madrid, Spain resembled the city center of New York, United States. The answer? Globalization. Defined as the process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments worldwide, globalization "is considered by some as a form of capitalist expansion which entails the integration of local and national economies into a global, unregulated market economy" (Guttar).

While globalization stems from an economic framework, the process related directly with travel. As advances in transportation, technology, and communication methods continue, the world witnesses the increased spread of interactions that come from growth in international trade, ideas, and culture. While globalization does bring prosperity to countries across the world, it also adds homogeneity to the travelers' experience. While some may enjoy the simplicity that comes from known and comfortable territory overseas, others may crave more localized travel experiences.

3.6 Accessibility

Globalization improves accessibility to travel. There exist several complex reasons for why an individual would choose not to travel, and the ownership of a passport is one of them. The below chart from Forbes Magazine showcases the growth of Americans who have passports over time, with currently 42% of Americans owning the little black book that gives them at least the legal permission required to travel abroad, excluding any visas (McCarthy). While previously at a meager 15% back in 1997, passports have become slightly more ubiquitous.

Exhibit 2: Percentage of the U.S. Population Holding a Passport from 1989 to 2012



Part of the reason why Americans didn't feel the need to own a passport was due to their lack of international travel. The article furthers that "the pace of growth accelerated further in January 2007 when U.S. citizens traveling by air between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, Central

and South America, the Caribbean, and Bermuda were required to have a valid passport" (McCarthy). This, along with Congress' passing of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act in 2004 jumpstarted the need for passports, as the law required each foreign national entering the United States to carry a passport.

McCarthy clarifies the statistic, confirming that the percentage of Americans who own passports increases when limiting the filter to all employed people. The link between financial stability and traveling exist, but it seems that the accessibility problems arise from other issues as well: some Americans have simply never been exposed to travel. With increased globalization, and companies moving into and out of the United States, the world is bound to see a shift towards a more traveling-based culture.

Chapter 4

The Impact of Travel and Tourism on Communities

While travel and tourism have occurred for millennia, the tangible impacts of tourism on communities have only been documented as of late. Because tourism is often seasonal, the actual impacts manifest over periods of time. Surveying the field of research available on the topic reveals three main areas of analysis: 1) environmental impacts, 2) sociocultural impacts, and 3) economic impacts.

4.1 Environmental Impacts

In order to assess the impact that a traveler may have on different environments, it's important to lay out the various types of tourism that take place in these environments. Due to several factors associated with global growth and globalization, travelers have recently shifted their travels to more remote, pristine, and natural environments. The types of tourism include ecotourism, nature tourism, wildlife tourism, and adventure tourism. From rainforest and lakes and rivers to more rural villages or coastline resorts, people have showed a clear desire for the environment as an important criterion that decides their travel destinations.

At face value, the positive impacts include better education and increased awareness of environmental stewardship. Negatively, however, people end up destroying the environment that provides the very experience travelers seek to begin with. The impacts are multi-faceted, ranging from direct to indirect and short-term to long-term. Specifically, three categories come to mind: 1) facility impacts, 2) tourist activities, and 3) transit effects.

Facility impacts manifest themselves when regional areas evolve from places of exploration to places of active involvement and development (Butler). For instance, the Bahamas

grew from an area of natural fascination to a tourist hotbed that led to the construction of superstructure. Superstructure is defined as hotels, restaurants, shops, and specially made infrastructure such as roads and power supply to support the bandwidth of tourists flowing into the region. The effects compound as the tourism cycle prolongs, with more tourists seeking the experience of the host country. Namely, the demand for water increases from washing and waste disposal to drinking. Previously pristine bodies of water like rivers and small lakes become excessively extracted for the purposes of supporting large groups of people and end up getting polluted by the tourists.

Other types of pollution emerge as well, including noise pollution that has the capacity to disrupt wildlife and alter otherwise routine animal behaviors (Butler). Even light pollution impacts animals and wildlife, as the presence of light in areas that would otherwise go untouched disrupts feeding areas and can reduce reproductive behavior of many creatures. Because emerging market countries tend to use diesel or gasoline generators to produce power, noise pollution increases alongside the existing pollution from noisy tourists. All these impacts compound with the general waste and garbage that results from abnormal levels of people inhabiting an area, which increases with the amount of food and beverages consumed that create plastic and non-biodegradable waste.

Proponents of a free global market argue that the costs of tourism are often outweighed by the benefits associated with increased economic activity and cultural mixing. Yet the recent evidence on travel and tourism fails to provide a solid case in such a direction. Many communities are often left ravaged by travelers from other countries, often left worse off under a façade of "global integration" and cultural assimilation.

Perhaps most important to analyze when evaluating the impacts of a tourist on a community are actual activities themselves. Tourists' main reasons for vacations include engaging in many types of physical activities, such as hiking, trekking, kayaking, bird watching, wildlife safaris, surfing, snorkeling, and scuba-diving. All these activities undoubtedly affect the local ecology of a community.

Take hiking and camping for instance, which directly impact the activity area. Most obvious is the compaction and erosion of the trails. When trails continue to be used daily, the hikers wear down and compact the soil and ground of the trails. Fallen trees and other obstacles either widen existing trails or create the need for sub-trails to bypass the obstacles. When such damage occurs, the environment undergoes a flurry of other impacts such as damage of vegetation, loss of vegetation height, reduction in foliage cover, exposure of roots, migration of trampled vegetation, and the incursion of non-native species (Marion). These non-native species tend to be invasive and alter the fabric and biodiversity of the host environment.

Indirect impacts last much longer. Soil porosity worsens, affecting microflora composition, seed dispersion, germination, and soil nutrient composition (Hammitt). Multi-day trips from groups may seem positive for the campers but end up severely affecting the surrounding environments. The waste generated from camping also affects human-wildlife interactions, including the habituation of wildlife to human contact and food sources. At this point, humans are impacted as well with an increased risk to wildfires.

Nature-based tourism primarily impacts environments negatively. The irony lies in that people seek nature adventures to better appreciate their environments yet end up detrimentally affecting those same environments. Aggressive non-native species become more established in

these areas, creating new resource availability for themselves while taking away resources for the host species.

There exist many examples of invasive species that have erupted through tourism, namely the "Bigheaded ant" (Anderson). sKnown as one of the worst invasive species, the bigheaded ant (*Pheidole megacephala*) was discovered in the Galapagos islands in 2007 within the cargo shipments that carried tourist supplies. These ants spread fast as tourism picked up in the surrounding environment, contaminating the area and preventing the growth of native species. The ants spread in mundane ways, including being carried by travelers in their shoes and gear, as well as pets or other animals that traveled across the areas.

While there are ways to mitigate the risks of these invasive species from taking control of host environments, the impacts represent the tip of the iceberg. The problem with tourism impacts lie in that 1) there are so many, and 2) they are hard to define and prioritize. The vast array of environmental impacts has led people to let go of curbing their impacts entirely, despite exhibiting an awareness of the many issues that run rampant in these environments.

Wildlife viewing represents a quintessential part of nature traveling for humans. From land to the ocean, the classic example of this type of tourism includes the "wildlife safari" in African countries. Places like Kenya, Botswana, and Tanzania have led the world in African wildlife safaris. Tourists tend to seek the views of five main animals: the African lion, African elephant, African leopard, cape buffalo, and the rhinoceros (Roe). Aside from the environmental impacts that come along with the deterioration of the area, the animals undergo psychological effects under the presence of humans.

For every group of humans that observe an animal, the animal's heart rate and stress hormones skyrocket, creating a slew of complex dynamics for certain predators and preys. For

instance, hyenas and baboons have learnt to observe the specific locations of tourist safari cars and strive to find these areas to steal cheetah kills and other animal prey, permanently altering the balance of the food chain between preys and predators, and keystone species (Roe).

To make matters worse, some tourism relies on the killing of local animals. Known as "trophy hunting," tourists spend time, money, and energy hunting popular animals for leisure (Ripple). Despite discussion at the federal and international level regarding the ethics of such practices, the animals continue to be killed, altering the environmental fabric of different tourist destinations across the globe.

Transit effects stem from the environmental impacts that arise from the act of traveling. A seven-hour trip on typical forms of flight such as the Boeing 747 creates a whopping 220 tons of carbon dioxide emissions, which equals the emissions that come from an annual use of the average family car, or the average energy needed to power a family home for over 17 years (YouSustain). With flight travel increasing by the year as airlines reduce costs due to competitive market forces and more efficient energy processing methods, the greenhouse gasses produced by the tourism industry can only grow at higher rates in the future. In fact, 2015 shows an estimate of 5% of global greenhouse gas emission created by air travel alone.

The greenhouse gas emissions that emerge from transit contribute to larger issues like the rising average global temperature, otherwise known as global warming. As temperatures rise due to a multitude of factors including the greenhouse gas emissions produced by transit, oceans warm and the chances for abnormal weather events such as floods and hurricanes increase. Acidification rises in ocean, and second-round effects arise as well, including the bleaching of coral reefs worldwide (Orr).

4.2 Sociocultural Impacts

With a highly globalized world and mixing of cultures, people begin to seek to some extent a level of "authenticity" in their travels. That is, tourists not only travel to escape their current realities at home, but also travel to experience different cultural settings within their natural environments. Traveling to another destination offers some opportunity for deep understanding of other people and education. Yet serious impacts stem from the results of tourism. Namely, the social interactions that occur between the host and tourist create three main effects on communities at the local level: 1) commodification of culture, 2) the demonstration effect, and 3) cultural acculturation.

Culture becomes commoditized when a local economy "boxes up" cultural traditions and artifacts and sells to the tourists in order to make profits that add to the local economy (Shepard). Here, cultural observation occurs, yet for a primary purpose of economic activity rather than deep understanding. The issue that some may have with such a claim is that it becomes difficult to define the bright line between the "understanding" of a culture and the generic "consumption" of a culture. There seems to exist a general bias towards cultural understanding, which has a higher place in in the ethics of people compared to mere cultural consumption.

When traveling to rural areas that often host the classic street markets that contain various sellers of "local artifacts," there's a clear economic benefit given to the locals who get to profit off the cultural exchanges that come with tourism. Known as "rural tourism," the creation of business and jobs for local artisans is often perceived as a cure for poverty in certain emerging markets, as the mere existence of tourists that frequent the area leads to other positive effects to the general area like improvement of transportation infrastructure and development of a solid telecommunications network in the area.

Of course, the impacts go both ways, as the tourist now has a vested interest for the traditional arts and social practices in the region, a positive element of commodification (Shepard). Yet the debate ensues when critics of commodification argue that the hundreds of thousands of people who visit tourist areas don't particularly care for the cultural beliefs of locals, but rather care more for a sense of ownership that comes with being a part of it. General examples of this issue become more apparent with the rise of social media, as paper post cards that used to be sent to families and friends back at home have transformed into more pervasive examples on social media platforms: selfies on Facebook, photos on Instagram, and travel video blogs (vlogs) on YouTube. Critics take the argument one step further, by claiming that the monetization of cultural artifacts lessens the inherent value of the host culture.

As travel and tourism become more commoditized, previously positively held experiences, such as tours of the Taj Mahal, become mere products that a tourist buys for his own satisfaction. The experiences move away from authenticity, becoming mere side effects of an individual's desire to be a part of something different, even for a small period.

While development economists may argue that the rise of tourism is warranted, as culture should be utilized and treated just as any other natural resource, the contact between the secular West leads to the destruction of "pre-tourist cultures" (Shepard). Increasing tourism in emerging market economies often leads to diseases that plague the local areas, creating problems like drug addiction, crime, prostitution, and an overall decline in social stability. Perhaps a philosophical argument can be made here, that such effects are inevitable in a world of capitalist and free-market tendencies, that inevitably creates a system of winners and losers in any exchange.

An interesting impact of tourism is the *demonstration effect*, which refers to copying of behavioral patterns by local inhabitants of visiting tourists (Fisher). One theory for this is the perceived rise of social status that comes from copying tourists' culture.

The social behavior of locals thus becomes altered, who prioritize assimilating to an external framework of tourist culture over their own traditional set of value systems. Critics of the demonstration effect argue that tourism represents one of the many changes in a society. In fact, several examples of foreign lifestyle consumption already exist in the form of advertisements, magazines, and films, showing that tourism isn't the only example of evidence of locals adopting external cultures (Fisher). Additionally, the demonstration effect carries an inherent bias in the premise of the argument, which implies that a local culture must be protected by stronger and more intrusive outside influences. The influence of outside cultures is inherently negative. Critics summarize their issue with the premise by citing that "all cultures are in a continual process of change," so tourism itself shouldn't be considered as destructive (Fisher).

Acculturation occurs when the destination or host community experiences dramatic shifts in its social fabric and world view (Kastamu). Seen as a method of modernizing a community, acculturation paves the way for cultural assimilation where the host community adopts practices developed practices by another group. Globalization plays a large role in acculturation, as evidenced by multinational companies increasing their footholds in several countries despite differing tastes and preferences. For example, McDonalds has over 34,000 restaurants in 119 countries across the world. The mere symbol of the golden arch shows that cultures are converging, while such acculturation contributes to the "homogenization of cultural differences and the decline of traditional societies" (Kastamu). In lieu of commodification, local cultures

market their cultures as more modern in hopes of attracting more tourists, and thus gaining social status and economic benefits.

4.3 Economic Impacts

In 2014, travel and tourism generated $7.6 trillion and 277 million jobs, making up 10% of the global GDP (Turner 3). In recent years, travel and tourism have grown at a faster rate than several other economic sectors such as automotive, financial services, and healthcare. Falling oil prices, which contribute to a lower cost of living, coupled with rising dispensable household income have helped reduce overall costs for air travel.

The economic impacts of tourism splits into several categories: spending made by visitors enjoying tourism experiences such as beach holidays or ski trips, spending on leisure items, spending related to business, and capital investment (Zhang).

Direct economic impacts arrive when goods and services are commoditized and sold, which encompasses accommodations and entertainment, food and beverage services, and retail opportunities. All people are involved in the tourism commodity value chain, including residents, visitors, companies, and the government. The key aspect of direct economic impacts on tourism is that they reside within a country's borders and are implemented by "residents and non-residents for business and leisure purposes" (Turner 2).

On the other hand, indirect impacts of tourism primarily stem from the inflow of capital that comes from private and governments entities investing in countries to further their interests. Commonly referred to as "foreign direct investment," countries will seek economic opportunities outside its borders for a variety of reasons, including better financial stability. While the investments of such entities may impact several aspects of the economy, local and tourist

stakeholders all benefit as well. A prime example of an indirect economic impact on tourism is how restaurants seek more resources and supplies to fuel their operations during seasons of increased tourism. Indirect economic impacts accounted for 50.7% of the total economic contribution provided by travel and tourism to the global GDP in 2014 (Turner 2).

Perhaps the most intuitive way in which a tourist indirectly contributes to a local economy is through currency, which ends up re-circulating locally. The injected capital enters right when a transaction as simple as someone buying a souvenir occurs.

Positive Economic Impacts

Positive effects of tourism on a country range from increased jobs, a higher quality of life for locals, and an increased amount of wealth in the general area. Furthermore, tourism can also bring in renovation, rebuilding, and restoration to historical sites, which enhances the spread of the local culture to tourists who seek the experience (Wyllie). Positive impacts benefit both the hosts of a community and the tourists visiting the same community.

Tourism can support improvement to the natural environment, which brings in growth for national parks, man-made infrastructure, and waste-treatment plants. All this economic stimulus helps countries diversify their employment and income potential, and further develop resources within the community (Mason). As tourism matures in a given community, the job market becomes more developed and nuanced than before, which leads to an increase in average income throughout the community (Rollins Et Al.).

The economic impacts of tourism cascade forward, because as a local economy is stimulated, diversification leads to businesses manufacturing goods locally, with local business owners expanding to new markets. Such economic benefits are not universal across tourism

communities, as often the jobs themselves can remain seasonal and low-paying (Rollins Et Al.). In terms of pricing, high tourist seasons lead to increased revenue, but also higher prices for goods and services that locals have trouble paying. The side effect pushes out local consumer demand for goods and services and creates an empty vacuum of pricing at the end of a tourist season for a community. A sudden drop in prices means increased economic volatility, which puts the tourist regions that are developing economies at a disadvantage.

Negative Economic Impacts

As mentioned in the discussion of the environment, negative economic impacts tend to form after the tourist destination site strips a local community of its resources. As populations rise, the magnitude of the impacts rises as well. The constant usage of resources at a large-scale during tourist seasons leaves the resources themselves unstainable and exhausted, further exposing the carrying capacity of a host community to more risk.

When negative impacts take a community by surprise, it often becomes too late for local governments to impose restrictions and regulations to circumvent the issues. Quickly declining economic conditions can steamroll into larger economic issues. For instance, the pricing gap can lead to deflationary spirals, where businesses shut down without local monetary policy that could aid through price controls. In many developing countries that thrive on the tourism industry for economic growth, the financial infrastructure in place to control such fluctuations do not tend to be sophisticated enough to identify such problems on a larger scale before then break lose.

Chapter 5

The Impacts of Paid Time Off (PTO) Policies on Travel

5.1 Background

During my trip to Delhi, I chose to spend my two weeks staying at a well-known hostel known as the "Madpackers Hostel." There I'd spend every morning sharing breakfast with travelers across the world. Most of the people I met were working individuals in some capacity who took off work using their companies' respective PTO policies. People from certain countries seemed to have better deals back home then others, which influenced the way they perceived travel for leisure.

I was amazed to learn about how specific countries, namely Germany and Australia, maintained positive attitudes towards taking time off to travel. The industry fields weren't limited either, as people from all sorts of industries in Australia seemed to have similar relationships with their employers when it came to travel IT services, finance, and arts/music industries. Before delving into potential links between PTO and travel, we must define how paid time off came about.

5.2 Definition

Typically created by firms through some form of documentation, PTO outlines a "bank" of time where employers can pool days that employees are allotted to not come into work. The days themselves get classified into several categories, including sick days, vacation days, and personal days.

While the delineation between the type of time off exists, PTO hours generally compass all types of leave without distinguishing absences from personal, vacation, or sick days. Upon signing their initial job offer employees agree to the PTO terms set forth by their employer, which sets the exact number of hours or days available and may or may not include a "rollover" policy which would allow for employees to add previously unused PTO days to future employment cycles. Other companies only allow PTO days to accrue during the year, with any remaining days left dissolving at the end of the year.

Some plans accommodate for unforeseen circumstances that would require stepping out of work, including jury duty, military duty in the case of a draft, or taking time off for bereavement in times of loss in the family. Despite labor unions' desire to broaden the scope of PTO, current policies do not include the following: disability leave, workers compensation, family and medical leave, sabbaticals, or community service leaves. In competitive industries like tech, firms have looked to implement these additional categories to sweeten the deal for future employees.

5.3 PTO in the United States

While the formalized term applies primarily to the United States, countries across the world have similar policies. The US government sets no federal legal requirement for a minimum amount of paid vacation days, so incentives such as recruiting efforts and employee retention drive the rationale for companies instituting PTO policies in the workplace. The US seems alone here, given most countries legally mandate a minimum amount of paid annual leave by law. For the five-day workweek, the average PTO policy for most developed countries hovers around 20 days a year. Exhibit 3 outlines through a table the standardized PTO policy for a

handful of developed countries (Ghoseh 17). There exists a clear disparity between the US and other countries when it comes to legally mandated days off by the federal government. Such a disparity could potentially influence how people perceive PTO itself, and thus impact an employee's propensity to take time off to begin with.

Exhibit 3: Paid Vacation Numbers for Major Countries

Country	Paid vacation (five-day workweek)
Denmark	25 to 30 days
Poland	20 to 26 days
United Kingdom	20 days
Australia	20 days
Austria	25 days
Luxembourg	25 days
France	25 days
Sweden	25 days
Portugal	22 to 25 days
Spain	22 days
Switzerland	20 days
Finland	20 days
Germany	20 days
Italy	20 days
Netherlands	20 days
Belgium	20 days
Greece	20 days
Canada	10 days
Japan	20 days
South Korea	11 to 15 days
Brazil	20 to 30 days
Argentina	10 to 20 days
United States	0 days

The gap between the US and other countries in PTO policy widens when considering legally mandated paid holidays, where the US offers none and the rest of the world's developed economies offering anywhere from five to 13 paid holidays annually (Schmidt 1). As a result, about 25% of Americans go without any paid time off. The average worker who works in the private sector gets around nine days of PTO and six paid holidays annually, which ends up as less than half the global standard set by developed countries as shown in Exhibit 3.

To make matters worse, the paid vacation and holidays that do exist tend to favor higher-income workers. While higher-wage employees have an 88% chance of receiving any sort of PTO, lower-wage employees have a lower chance of 69% (Schmidt 1). Even when lower-wage, part-time, or small-business workers do receive PTO, they often get far fewer days on average compared to higher-wage, full-time, larger-establishment workers. Overall, the statistics unveil the elusive nature of PTO in the United States, which in turn forces people to think twice before taking time off from work.

Several studies point to negative impacts that arise from not having enough PTO. Without PTO, people tend to stray away from staying at home when sick, which leads to mounds of costs to companies in the form of lower workplace productivity. The National Partnership for Women and Families reveals that more than 50% of workers who don't receive PTO in the form of sick days have ended up going to work sick, which furthers the risk of spreading contagious diseases to other employees at work (Beauchamp).

The 2014 RAND Workplace Wellness Report, sponsored by the US Department of Labor (DOL) and the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), discovered that American employers aspire to reverse such trends of absenteeism through well programs that seek to improve health and general wellbeing, lower medical costs, and increase productivity (Mattke et

al. 2014). While wellness programs may seem rosy on the outside, the lack of PTO seems to be the largest issue at hand. PTO offers a unique opportunity for people to get away from work entirely, providing a unique sense of autonomy and self-actualization that doesn't exist in company-mandated wellness policies.

The bleak culture surrounding PTO in America manifests not only through the lack of PTO policy, but also through the attitudes of people who have PTO to use. Almost 50% of Americans fail to completely use up their allotted PTO (Weingus). A survey conducted by Google Consumer Surveys, which asked 15,00 American adults how many days of PTO they took in the past year, reveals that 42% of people are not using a single day of PTO, implying that barriers exist from exercising PTO days even when allotted time off. Several patterns exist within the survey that highlight cultural ideas surrounding the best stage in life to take PTO. Namely, women took less days off then men, younger people used less days than older people, suburban workers took more vacation days than non-suburban living workers, and people in the Western area of the United States tended to take more days off than those in other regions.

5.4 Types of PTO

Vacation Days

Vacation days accrue as a benefit over time, meaning the amount of days off earned per year tends to increase with an employee's experience within the firm. A first-year employee may receive 14 vacation days, while a third year employee may get 21 vacation days to incentivize people to stay longer at a specific firm. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) finds that employees on average have around 10 vacations under PTO in the United States (Che). Vacation days typically come with some degree of communication beforehand to ensure that other

members on a team know when the employee utilizing her PTO for vacation takes off. The actual time frame of how much in advance one must report to her supervisor varies from firm to firm. Vacation days typically correlate the most with the type of PTO that ends up being used for travel and tourism. Technically, taking non-vacation PTO days for leisure travel violates the definition of the other types of PTO. Yet it seems that most individuals blur the lines when it comes to what constitutes a "vacation" day.

Personal Days

Albeit arbitrary, personal days imply use for "personal reasons." Examples of person reasons to take PTO include taking care of a sick child at home, mourning a death in the family, or the observation a religious holiday not included under a company's allotted PTO holidays. Unlike vacation days, personal days tend to sustain more value to the average American, given the unexpected nature of personal days allows people to take them upon short notice. As a result, companies allot fewer personal days than vacation days.

Floating Holidays

In certain circumstances, companies will offer "floating holidays" to avoid liability that arises when a company prioritizes certain holidays over others. Not all employees practice a specific religion and observe the same holidays, so a "floating holiday" clause in PTO policy allows for the employee to redistribute this type of PTO per her discretion. Floating holidays end up being treated as quasi-personal days, given the flexible nature of the policy.

Sick Days

Sick days cover a variety of illnesses ranging from the common cold to more serious injuries that require missing work. While allotted sick days typically don't require documentation, one can also take a sick day with a doctor's appointment note or proof of surgery or any other time-intensive medical operation. Things get a bit unclear when considering the recovery time needed for such medical operations, and whether resting at home for an extended period post-operation would result in still getting paid time off for those days. The United States' lax approach to PTO applies to paid sick leave as well, with no legal mandate or requirement for employers to give paid sick leave. Regardless, Americans on average tend to have around eight days of paid sick leave.

5.5 Links between PTO and Travel

Regarding the value of PTO, there exists a trend that Americans view PTO as an opportunity to take off work for vacation. The prior distinction of Americans not having legally mandated PTO as designated by the government seeps into something more important: vacation culture. Whether or not one has the right amount of PTO days required, the culture surrounding vacation plays an even more influential role in determining the average American's propensity to travel.

Challenges at work tend to have the largest influence on Americans' desire and ability to travel or vacation. In a paper titled, "The State of American Vacation 2018," the US Travel Association provides an in-depth analysis into various workplace barriers that made taking vacation a less likely possibility.

Exhibit 4: A Survey on Barriers to Travel

Barriers to Travel	Unused Vacation Days Among Those Who Rank as Top Barrier
Fear Looking Replaceable	61%
My Workload is Too Heavy	56%
Lack of Coverage at Work	56%
My Pet	54%
The Logistical Hassles of Traveling	54%
Concerns about Security and Safety when Traveling	54%
The Cost of Travel	53%
My Child/Children	52%
Being Away From My Regular Routine	52%

According to the above chart, employees often worry about their reputation in the workplace and perceive taking time off to travel the world as appearing "less dedicated" or "replaceable." These sentiments lead to people leaving more than half, 61%, of their vacation days unused. Other potential worries like a heavy workload or not being able to receive coverage at work lead to people never taking full advantage of their PTO, leaving days to spare. While there exist other non-work-related reasons for why people don't take off as much as they can, work pressures seem to be the most influential.

Cost and income seem to also play roles in limiting the desire to travel. Yet the study reveals that those who agreed that cost was indeed a barrier end up taking the same amount of

vacation times as the national average. The economics of travel do dictate the types of travel people engage in, with domestic travel striking a more appealing tone compared to international travel given considerably cheaper airfare and more lax regulatory requirements.

In terms of how employers view taking time off for travel, nearly 38% of employees indicate that their company culture actively encouraged vacation. While the trend seems to point upward, given the same statistic hovered around 33% the year prior, the US seems left behind compared to other countries in employers' attitudes toward encouraging travel. Traveling remains at the top of the list of priorities for most employees, with paid vacation ranking as the second most important benefit after healthcare. Retirement plans, flexible work options, bonuses, and sick leave all trail PTO for travel.

Employees don't get enough encouragement most of the time to travel, specifically from their employer. Roughly 62% of Americans went out of their way to claim that their companies either 1) send mixed signals, 2) discourage, or 3) say nothing regarding vacation time. Such ambivalence contributes to the reasons why people feel compelled to skip out on their PTO, and spend time working instead. In an economy that has witnessed the most recent 2008 financial crisis, Americans tend to err on the more conservative side to job management, which involves taking less time off. In an almost twisted manner, sacrificing personal time has evolved into a sign of resilience in the work place, where one's ability to make more personal sacrifices at work enhances perceived commitment to work and the company.

Senior management may seem like a potential solution when looking to improve the bleak culture for vacation time at work. Yet 70% of senior management and executives seem to feel strongly about companies encouraging employees to use all their time off, with 64% taking

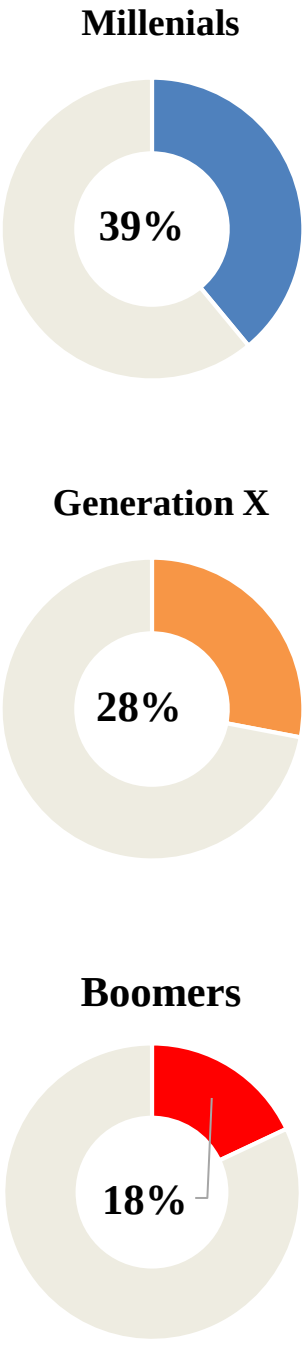
it a step further by encouraging employees to openly talk about their vacation experiences after returning to work. Such a mindset has yet to permeate into the majority of corporate America.

5.6 A New Concept: "Workcation"

To comply with the unspoken rules of PTO, employees and companies have joined together to nurture a new type of travel: a vacation via work, a work vacation, a "workcation." Rather a proactive decision, a workcation allows people to work remotely in an alternate destination. Workcations allow Americans to enjoy different places without expending their treasured vacation time.

The data reveals that the concept remains new among Americans, as only 10% of employees in the US have even taken a workcation. While around 29% of all workers seem to think of the idea as appealing, the remaining 70% called the idea of a workcation unappealing. Zooming in closer on the small population of those who have tried the concept, 55% of this group deem their most recent workcation as appealing. Depending on the demographic, different people have varying opinions on workcations. That is, younger Millennials seem most interested in the idea, while Generation X'ers and Baby Boombers less so displayed in Exhibit 5.

Exhibit 5: Demographic Breakdown on Preference for the "Workcation"



The idea of a workcation aims to combat the notion that taking time off means being less dedicated to one's trade. The Project: Time Off study furthers that the people who are most

likely to desire a workcation are those concerned with their perception of looking less dedicated in the workplace. 34% of people who say they have a difficult time getting away from work due to workload find the workcation as an attractive option, while only 27% of those don't see workload as an impediment to vacations find workcations appealing. The statistics point out the underlying culture that surrounds Americans regarding taking time off: work matters.

Chapter 6

Linking Travel with Identity

6.1 Sizing up the Competition: Australia

During my travels to both Spain and Northern India, Australians struck me as a group that travels with ease considerably more than average. During my time at the Madpackers Hostel in Delhi, I interviewed several individuals who spoke at length about their personal experiences. Below are quick summaries of the profiles of a couple of them.

Maria – 21 years old

I met Maria over breakfast one day during the hostel. We quickly began conversing given the similarities in our ages and learned about each other's rationale for traveling to Delhi. Maria had just finished a six-month internship in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. She applied through an international program that pairs students with companies to work for and host families to live with. As a result, Maria's experience with India was vastly different than some of the other people I had encountered. Maria had a level of comfort and integration with the area, purely because of the six months she had already spent in another city. Despite Delhi being new to her, Maria felt that her experience integrating with the host family brought her closer to locals in Lucknow.

Yet India was only a small part of Maria's larger travels. Maria had already done the classic "European Tour," as well as traversed across parts of Southeast Asia. Maria explained that the undergraduate education system was built differently than that of the United States. Students spend their undergraduate experiences often with the same kids they grew up with

throughout their primary and secondary education paths. Kids then attend regional institutions and learn in a more intimate cohort.

This meant that Australians were devoid of the classic American "college experience," filled with meeting new people and making life long connections in a four-year span. The dynamic shifts however during the latter parts of attending an Australian university, where students are encouraged to travel outside the country. Australian travel hinges on a push given by the government itself. The nature of "finding oneself" occurs more in an Australian's travel post-graduation than the undergraduate college experience, which is rather more mundane and centered around amassing knowledge.

Albeit anecdotal, my conversations with Maria revealed the widely different attitudes on travel at the undergraduate level. For me, spending two weeks abroad during my winter break was already venturing several steps outside the comfort zone of a typical college student. Yet for Maria, two weeks was just the tip of the iceberg. Even before graduating from undergrad, she had spent over 18 months traveling abroad.

What was interesting was how Maria framed her ability to leave undergrad for chunks of time. Rather than calling her travels a "leave of absence," or "study abroad," which is typically the way Americans leave undergrad for around a semester at a time, Maria simply acknowledged her travels a natural part of her undergraduate experience. Even the façade of "studying abroad" no longer needed to be used to mask the more pressing rationale for traveling abroad: just to see the world. Such attitudes that begin at such a young age permeate the structural ideas surrounding travel, which end up forming into routine habits at later ages for many Australians.

Marcus – 28 years old

Within minutes of meeting Marcus outside the Madpackers Hostel, we decided to head to a street food vendor on the streets of New Delhi for lunch. Marcus had an approachable and sanguine attitude, where he openly invited all my questions and inquiries regarding his identity as an Australian traveler. Just watching Marcus interact with the other hostelers signaled to me that he was not a novice in the field of traveling. Since age 16, Marcus had been constantly spending chunks of time every year in foreign countries, simply driven by his own prerogative. What was most striking about Marcus' travels was his autonomy as a solo traveler. Despite grouping up with friends he would make on his journeys for months at a time, Marcus always began his travels by himself. Part of a larger backpacking culture as Marcus explained, solo traveling provided a different dimension to traveling that many fail to experience.

By traveling alone, Marcus was able to put his identity in an environment that forced discomfort. Without another person to directly rely on for recommendations or general wisdom, Marcus felt more like an explorer and less like a tourist. He defined tourists with a level of pompousness as groups of people who spent more time sending photos to friends back at home than enjoying the experiences themselves.

As a traveler, Marcus viewed himself more as a nomad who entered his trips with a blank slate. This mindset introduced Marcus to new experiences with people and moved away from small talk. After all, part of my ease of conversation with Marcus came from the fact that he refused to carry my initial attempts of conversation through small talk. My initial inquiries of "what's your name, how long have you been here, what have you seen," were met with Marcus slowing down of the pace of conversation. Marcus diverted the conversation to what we wanted to see at the given moment, which was experience the local foods of Delhi. It wasn't until we

started taking bites of our food that we began truly getting to know each other through more introspective questions. Here we see the role that the way we approach travel itself impacts the quality of our experiences. While difficult to frame in objective terms, the various types of traveling seem to influence how one perceives himself during the experience.

Marcus further explained that economic stability dictates the propensity of travel, recognizing his privilege of coming from a family that went on such ventures during his childhood. As a child of Italian immigrants, Marcus' family frequently visited Italy and other parts of Europe growing up. His family already laid down the framework for travel, so it was only second nature for Marcus to seek such adventures independently.

Several factors contributed to Marcus' openness to travel: 1) Australian openness to travel, 2) financial independence, and 3) taking longer trips compared to shorter ones. The first category regarding Australian attitudes to travel was not unknown to me, especially after my talks with Maria from earlier. In terms of financial independence, Marcus mentioned that his career allows him to take frequent breaks from work. As a self-employed media aggregator for music artists, Marcus can not only set his own hours, but also work from virtually anywhere in the world. The interconnected nature of technology allows Marcus to communicate with people from anywhere, if he carries his laptop and has a solid Wi-Fi connection. As countries become more globalized and interconnected, it seems that such factors are only set to improve. Finally, Marcus stressed the importance of spending at least two to three weeks in a country to better gain an understanding of a locale's respective culture. He stressed the importance of developing one's own routine in a new environment before checking off landmarks and experiences. It seemed that Marcus felt more comfortable trying to simulate a new lifestyle that adapts to a new area over aggressively moving forward with a preset travel itinerary.

6.2 Rationale for Australian Travel

In an article titled, “Why do Australians travel so much?” Ben Groundwater provides his own structured rationale for the propensity of Australian travel. Living in hostels and hotels, drinking in bars and restaurants, and wandering around museums, Australians seem to be traveling all over the world to the point that the activity has become a part of Australia’s “national psyche” (Groundwater).

The author begins his argument by first providing a financial incentive for Australians to travel. As part of one of the wealthiest countries in the world determined by GDP per capita, Australians first have the monetary means to travel. The financial accessibility to travel overseas matters, and it seems that Australians as a population can afford it more than the people of other nations.

Groundwater also reaffirms the importance of time off, as Australians can afford to take time off work without worrying about how their employer perceiving them negatively. The positive attitudes on travel have permeated the workplace itself, with employers encouraging Australians to take long periods of leave for the sake of traveling the world.

Geography also helps shape the positive-minded Australian attitude to travel. Australia’s demographic is based on immigration, meaning almost all Australians, including Marcus, have roots in other countries, which furthers the desire for one to investigate other lands. Even Maria, who comes from a family of Filipino immigrants, first began traveling internationally to meet her grandparents in the Philippines.

Yet perhaps the most important factor in determining Australian high desire for travel links back to the Australian identity itself. Groundwater explains that not too long ago, perhaps around 30 years ago, Australians as a country held a belief that their culture wasn’t rich enough.

Built on British colonization, Australians failed to gather a sense of identity of their own. On a global scale, the search for a more cohesive identity drives people to form their pride through their own ways. Australians perceive their own country as a frontier of stability, meant to be settled in later in life. During one's youth however, one should go out of her way to see what else is out there in the world. "You need to leave Australia to properly appreciate it," concludes Groundwater, stressing the importance of leaving one's cultural home to understand the value of identity.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

7.1 Exploring yourself: Travel and cultural identity

When discussing loosely defined terms like "cultural identity," it becomes difficult to create frameworks that can be applied to groups of people at a time. The discussion of the "self" cannot be reduced to objective academic frameworks but lies in the minds of individuals. This means that understanding how travel impacts one's identity requires a more anthropological approach, based on real conversations with real people.

Perhaps one of the best examples of travel's connection with cultural identity can be explored through the rise of travel blogs, books, and other forms of documentation of travel by people across the globe. In Elizabeth Gilbert's novel, *Eat, Pray, Love*, published in February of 2006, Gilbert chronicles her travels around the world after a divorce. The story appealed to many Americans who faced personal issues of their own, as Gilbert's travels aimed to restore stability to a life that was thrown into disarray by an unhappy marriage. Gilbert's autonomy began through initiating the divorce itself, before spending the subsequent year traveling the world. Gilbert contextualized her year of travels through three main categories of self-reflection: 1) "Eat" by eating and enjoying life in Italy, 2) "Pray" by finding her spirituality in India, and 3) "Love" by striving for balance and falling in love with a Brazilian businessman in Bali, Indonesia.

Gilbert's work made national headlines and was both well received and criticized. In her review, Jennifer Egan of the *New York Times* summarized Gilbert's writing as "fueled by a mix of intelligence, wit and colloquial exuberance that is close to irresistible," while leaving out the

"confusion and unfinished business of real life." *Eat, Pray, Love*, does many things, but predominantly highlights the role that traveling plays in expanding one's horizons and helping one "find herself" (Egan). Such a mindset is far from a new one, as people have been traveling for personal identity reasons for years. The "European Tour" encompasses such a self-reflective journey for many American college students looking to cap off their undergraduate experience.

Joshunda Sanders and Diana Barnes-Brown wrote in *Bitch*, a feminist magazine, that "*Eat, Pray, Love* is not the first book of its kind, but it is a perfect example of the genre of priv-lit: literature or media whose expressed goal is one of spiritual, existential, or philosophical enlightenment contingent upon women's hard work, commitment, and patience, but whose actual barriers to entry are primarily financial" (Sanders). Sanders and Barnes-Brown acknowledge the existential nature of travel yet dispute the credibility of such experiences due to the financial barriers that often prevent people from engaging in travel itself. Gilbert's years' worth of travels to Europe and Asia involve massive opportunity costs: one must not only be able fund her travel endeavors, but also maintain enough savings where the opportunity cost of not working for the time of travel allows such an experience.

Gilbert's work adds more evidence to the growing relationship between travel and people to learn more about themselves. In an article from the *Huffington Post*, Heather Hopkins explains how travel is central to her identity (Hopkins). While she identifies as many things—Caucasian American, graphic designer, woman, artist, Californian—Hopkins says she identifies as a traveler above all else.

For Hopkins, identifying as a traveler means entering such a state of mind, where "a traveler is a person who thinks about traveling all the time." A traveler prioritizes travel above other responsibilities in life and makes sacrifices in order to travel. A traveler does not have to be

on the road at all times, but rather just have a burning desire to make changes in her life in order to fit her life around travel (Hopkins).

Hopkins' desire to travel means changing her lifestyle to make room for it. For instance, she doesn't work for companies that have little or no PTO policies in place. Yet again, we see parallels between PTO policy and people's attitude to travel. Except in this case, people like Hopkins hold companies' accountable by leaving them if she can't find adequate policies that satisfy her travel tendencies.

The traveling lifestyle seeps into Hopkins life back at home, as she goes out of her way to "subscribe to travel magazines, follow travel blogs," and even "write[s] a travel blog" of her own. The identity aspect of travel here seeps into a person's identity and becomes more than a passion. Hopkins' "constant, insatiable desire to be on the move, to go no new adventures, to see and experience new things," leads to a refreshing yet intense approach to travel, one that the average citizen may have trouble relating to.

7.2 The Commoditization and Future of Travel

The rise of study abroad programs in college are a small testament to the rapid accessibility of travel for a fledging twenty something. Throughout this thesis, we have encountered just how complex the concept has travel has become. The term "educated traveler" should take on new meaning. With an activity as prevalent as travel, one must put in the necessary due diligence before embarking on large journeys. For one, people should spend more time and energy evaluating the quality of their curated tourist experiences in another country or community.

The presence of easy-to-use online applications such as Yelp for restaurants, TripAdvisor for attractions, and Expedia for travel and lodging reservations, may seem to make travel more accessible. Yet the flipside reveals underlying impacts that the nature of the travel has on identity. For those that desire more than just another activity, perhaps taking the path of commoditization is not the best idea.

The bottom line for future travel depends on society, and the identities of the people that make up it. People should find their inner travelers within, and seek to reconcile their experiences abroad internally, to better understand themselves. Despite the externally facing aspect of travel, one should actively seek to employ both autonomy and deliberation on her travels.

Nonetheless, the uncertainty of the future regarding technology casts a dark shadow over how humans will engage as communities. The interconnectedness of the world seems to indicate a more unified global community on the horizon. Perhaps the future generations of travelers' relentless desires to appeal to their own identities will bring the world even closer together.

Chapter 8

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